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TAGS: PREL BY SF

SUBJECT: MBEKI INTERVENES IN RADJABU SITUATION

REF: A. BUJUMBURA 32

1B. MONTANEZ-MUHINDA-TRENKLE EMAIL OF 1/23/07

Classified By: Political Counselor Raymond Brown. Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) CNDD-FDD leader Hussein Radjabu departed the South African Embassy in Bujumbura the morning of January 23 after spending the night at the Embassy, confirmed South African Department of Foreign Affairs Director Rasheeda Adam (protect). Adam said that Radjabu, Minister of Communications Karenga, and a Radjabu aide originally came to the South African Embassy to brief the Charge on recent political developments. While at the Embassy, Radjabu learned that his personal bodyguards had been switched, which caused him to fear for his life.

12. (C) President Mbeki called Burundian President Nkurunziza the evening of January 22 to discuss Radjabu's situation, according to Adam. Nkurunziza assured Mbeki that Radjabu was safe. Based on that assurance, Radjabu left the South African Embassy the morning of January 23. Adam said that the South African Facilitator, Minister Charles Nqakula, was prepared to travel to Bujumbura to "assist" with the situation, but since Radjabu left the Embassy, Nqakula's trip was not necessary.

13. (C) Adam expressed concern about the growing political instability in Burundi and said that South Africa is looking at a series of options to defuse the situation (NFI). Adam expressed hope that the upcoming CNDD-FDD congress, which she understands has now been scheduled for February 24, would help resolve tensions within the ruling party.

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